

We claim:

1. A computer comprising:

at least one network component, each network component enabling the computer to communicate with one or more different networks; and,

5 an operating system having an initial boot sequence in which network connectivity is established only after a user has logged in, such that the user specifies a desired one of the one or more different networks during log-in.

10 2. The computer of claim 1, wherein the user specifies the desired one of the one or more different networks during log-in by specifying a unique user name and a unique domain.

3. The computer of claim 1, wherein the user specifies the desired one of the one or more different networks during log-in by specifying a unique combination of a user name and a domain.

15 4. The computer of claim 1, wherein the user specifies the desired one of the one or more different networks during log-in by specifying at least one or more of a unique user name, a unique network profile, and a unique hardware profile.

5. The computer of claim 1, wherein the initial boot sequence comprises at least one or more of: hardware detection, and kernel loading without network device drivers loading.

6. The computer of claim 1, wherein the initial boot sequence is also executed by a basic input/output system (BIOS) in conjunction with the operating system, and comprises at least a boot loader process without hardware profile selection, and kernel loading without network device drivers loading.

5 7. The computer of claim 1, wherein the initial boot sequence comprises at least user log-in including hardware profile selection, and hardware profile loading including network device drivers loading after the user log-in.

8. The computer of claim 1, such that the at least one network component comprises a modem enabling the computer to communicate with at least a subset of the one or
10 more different networks over a phone line.

9. The computer of claim 1, such that the at least one network component comprises a network adapter enabling the computer to communicate with at least a subset of the one or more different networks.

10. The computer of claim 1, such that the at least one network component comprises
15 a network adapter enabling the computer to communicate with at least a subset of the one or more different networks through a broadband modem.

11. The computer of claim 1, wherein the one or more different networks comprises one or more of: an Ethernet network, the Internet, an intranet, an extranet, a corporate network, a personal network, a wide-area networks (WAN), a local-area network
20 (LAN), and a virtual private network (VPN).

12. A method specifying a boot sequence for a computer comprising:

a pre-log-in boot sequence without selecting a hardware profile and without loading network device drivers; and,

a post-log-in boot sequence including loading of the network device drivers

5 consistent with a network profile and the hardware profile at least implicitly selected by a user during log-in.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the pre-log-in boot sequence comprises:

a power-on self-test (POST);

an initial start-up process;

10 a boot loader process without selecting the hardware profile;

operating system selection;

hardware detection;

configuration selection; and,

kernel loading without loading the network device drivers.

15 14. The method of claim 12, further comprising, between the pre-log-in boot sequence and the post-log-in boot sequence, log-in by the user, such that the user specifies a unique user name and a unique domain, the network profile and the hardware profile implicitly selected by the user specifying the unique domain.

20 15. The method of claim 12, further comprising, between the pre-log-in boot sequence and the post-log-in boot sequence, log-in by the user, such that the user specifies a unique combination of a user name and a domain, the network profile and the hardware profile implicitly selected by the user specifying the unique combination.

16. The method of claim 12, further comprising, between the pre-log-in boot sequence and the post-log-in boot sequence, log-in by the user, such that the user specifies a unique user name, a unique network profile, and a unique hardware profile, the network profile explicitly selected by the user specifying the unique network profile
5 and the hardware profile explicitly selected by the user specifying the unique hardware profile.

17. A computer-readable medium having instructions stored thereon for execution by a processor to perform a method comprising:

a pre-log-in boot sequence without selecting a hardware profile and without
10 loading network device drivers;

log-in by a user including at least implicit selection of a network profile and a hardware profile; and,

a post-log-in boot sequence including loading of the network drivers consistent with the network profile and the hardware profile.

18. The medium of claim 17, wherein the log-in by the user comprises the user specifying a unique user name and a unique domain, at least one of the network profile and the hardware profile implicitly selected by the user specifying the unique domain.

19. The medium of claim 17, wherein the log-in by the user comprises the user
20 specifying a unique combination of a user name and a domain, at least one of the network profile and the hardware profile implicitly selected by the user specifying the unique combination.

20. The medium of claim 17, wherein the log-in by the user comprises the user specifying a unique user name, a unique network profile, and a unique hardware profile, the network profile explicitly selected by the user specifying the unique network profile and the hardware profile explicitly selected by the user specifying the unique hardware profile.

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